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Lehi Yesteryears
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Malan's Service one of Lehi's first gas stations.

“ An old gas station may say more about us as a nation than a house of a former president.”, claims Mike Jackson, president of the Society for Commercial Archeology.

The memorable icons of a red-winged horse (Sybici), a long necked brontosaurus, (Sinclair), and a clam shell (Shell) are pure Americana.

Lehi's earliest service stations and garages were located on State Street to take advantage of the ever increasing automobile traffic on Utah's major roadway.

The People's Co-op was the first place in town where drivers could “fill 'er up” In March 1916, the Mercantile installed two 600 gallon gas tanks and a pump in front of the store. An early photo shows the hand-operated pump -- a gangly looking contraption with a large glass reservoir on top.

Local businessman Nahum Oscar Malan opened a small service station on the southeast corner of State and Center in May 1921. Officially Malan Service, most people called this place the ‘Keep off the Grass”

station because of the jocular sign Malan had hung over a miniscule plot of sod near the gas pump.

Malan was decidedly one of Lehi's most colorful personalities. When he was not fixing flats and pumping gas, the man of action was likely downtown slapping mustard on hot dogs at his confectionery.

Malan was also the town's undertaker. He nearly enhanced his mortuary business on August 20, 1921. Cruising along First East in a new Dodge automobile, Malan smashed into a buggy driven by Elizabeth Webb and three accompanying children.

Although it was raining and visibility reduced at the 400 North intersection, the chief cause of the accident was Malan's momentary distraction by the girlish charm of two well-proportioned sidewalk strollers.

Mrs. Webb and her three children (Carl, Dean and Zada Phillips) were shaken up, but uninjured though the horse had to be destroyed and the fancy automobile towed to Malan's Service for repair.

In November 1923, Malan moved the sales and service portion of his automobile business, along with his undertaker parlor, to the People's Bank of Lehi building (206 East State) he had just purchased.

Apparently mixing the two types of body work did not catch on , In 1925, Dr. Fred Worlton purchased the place and converted it into the Lehi Hospital.

Meanwhile Malan also sold his “Keep off the Grass” service station in August 1924.

The new owners, Kelly and Guy Wilson, established the “New Car Agency” which offered Durrant and Star Cars at prices ranging from \$890 to \$2,400. The building burned down in 1927 and contractor W.W, Dickerson built a new \$4,000 brick structure on the site in June of that year.

When the two-pump station opened on July 3, it sold Pep 88 gas. Round the clock service was also provided.

Dean Powell managed the station until the fall of 1933, when he took over his father James Powell’s station at Fifth West and Main. Young Powell was succeeded by Max Herron. Next came Sylvester Clark who was soon followed by Frances Grant.

For at time after World War II, Larry Glathar operated the station until Dean Powell released it from Utoco in 1948. When Powell leased a second station downtown his wife and son continued to operate the uptown facility for a time.

During the spring of 1953, the old Utoco service station was remodeled into an Arctic Circle by Brent Mackay. Initially his menu included bulk fresh freeze, thick malts, footlong hot dogs, and Brown Toppers (ice cream cone dipped in melted chocolate).

In 1954 he added hamburgers and french fries served up by Glennis Wing and JaLaine Singleton. The thick fries were not to be dunked in the customary plain ketchup but in a tasty “pink sauce” (ketchup and mayonnaise) which forever after altered local preferences.

The Arctic Circle was a seasonal operation; it opened early spring and closed with the arrival of heavy frost. A special for many Lehi Elementary students(the school was across the street) occurred on the last day of school.

For a single dollar you could purchase a hamburger, order of fries, and a drink of your choice. It was one of those simple pleasures unforgotten even after more than 30 years.

In the late 1960's Mae Daly and her family operated Mae's Take Out in the Arctic Circle building. In March 1973, David and Janice Sager opened a health food store on the premises. They featured fruit and vegetables, dairy products, herbs, teas, a wide variety of breads, and high-protein health foods products such as Tiger's Milk.

From 1974 until 1989, the old building stood vacant. Weeds grew up, and vandals broke out the windows. It was in a terminal state of dilapidation the summer of 1989 when it was set ablaze by mischievous youth and burned to the ground. The site today (written in 1992) is used by Snyder Concrete for equipment storage

Richard Van Wagoner was the Lehi Historian and wrote the book Lehi-Portrait of a Utah Town. He died in October 2010. Van Wagoner's collection of Yesteryear collection are located in the Lehi Archives. One of his collection will be share at this site monthly.